

2016 Charter School Sponsor Technical Assistance

**Charter Schools Program
Office of School Transformation
Division of Innovation and Effectiveness**

November 9, 2015

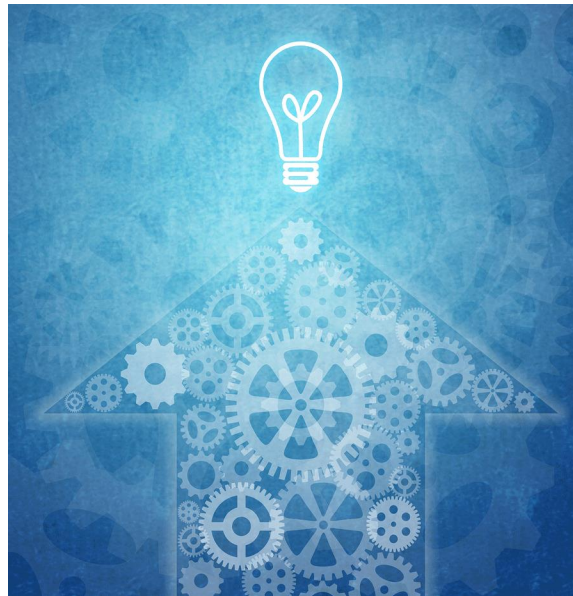


**SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION**

South Carolina Department of Education

Office of School Transformation
Innovation and School Choice Team

November 9, 2015



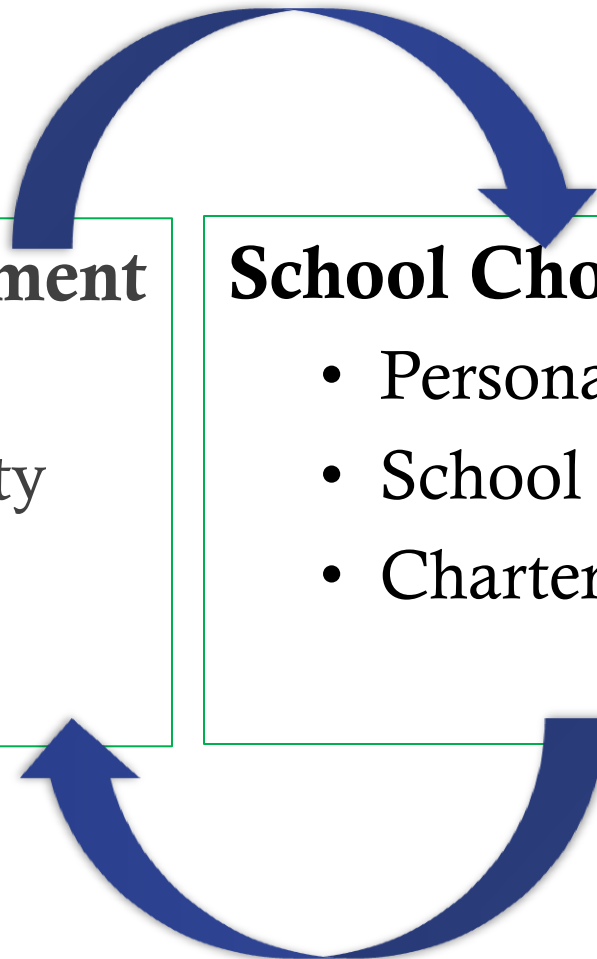
Office of School Transformation

School Improvement

- State Priority
- Federal Priority
- Federal Focus
- SIG

School Choice & Innovation

- Personalized Learning
- School Choice
- Charter Schools



US Department of Education CSP Grant Award

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) will broaden its support for charters and invigorate innovation efforts across the public school system

- Goals of the Grant
 - spreading innovation throughout the public school system
 - providing sub-grants for planning and implementation
 - improving standards and effectiveness of sponsors and charter boards
 - evaluating the effects of charter schools on student achievement and growth

SCDE CSP Grant Details

- Funding
 - 15M initial funding, with potential up to 30M
 - Performance
 - Congressional funding
- Target
 - 8 new schools per year
- Grant Period
 - Waiver granted to extend grant project from 3 to 5 years

SCDE CSP Sub-Grants

Competitive Priority Points

- District without any charter schools
- Low-performing schools
 - physically located within the attendance zone of one of the state's lowest-performing schools; serving same grade levels
- Closing achievement gaps
 - propose to address closing achievement; based on the needs of students projected to attend
- At-risk students
 - serving at-risk, secondary students (as defined by South Carolina statute)



Walking the Authorizer Tightrope

*Monitoring without Managing and
Closure Concepts*

Background

In 1996, the South Carolina Legislature passed the Charter Schools Act, thereby providing citizens the opportunity to apply to operate a public school. The focus of charter schools is to provide quality educational choices for parents and students.

Intent of the General Assembly

- create a legitimate avenue for parents, teachers, and community members to take responsible risks and create new, innovative, and more flexible ways of educating all children within the public school system.
- create an atmosphere in South Carolina's public school systems where research and development in producing different learning opportunities are actively pursued and where classroom teachers are given the flexibility to innovate and the responsibility to be accountable.
- §59-40-30 of the South Carolina Charter Schools Act of 1996

Purpose of Charter Schools

The Charter School Act is enacted to:

- improve student learning
- increase learning opportunities for students
- encourage the use of a variety of productive teaching methods
- establish new forms of accountability for schools
- create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site
- assist South Carolina in reaching academic excellence
- create new, innovative, and more flexible ways of educating children within the public school system, with the goal of closing achievement gaps between low performing student groups and high performing student groups

What is a charter school?

A charter school:

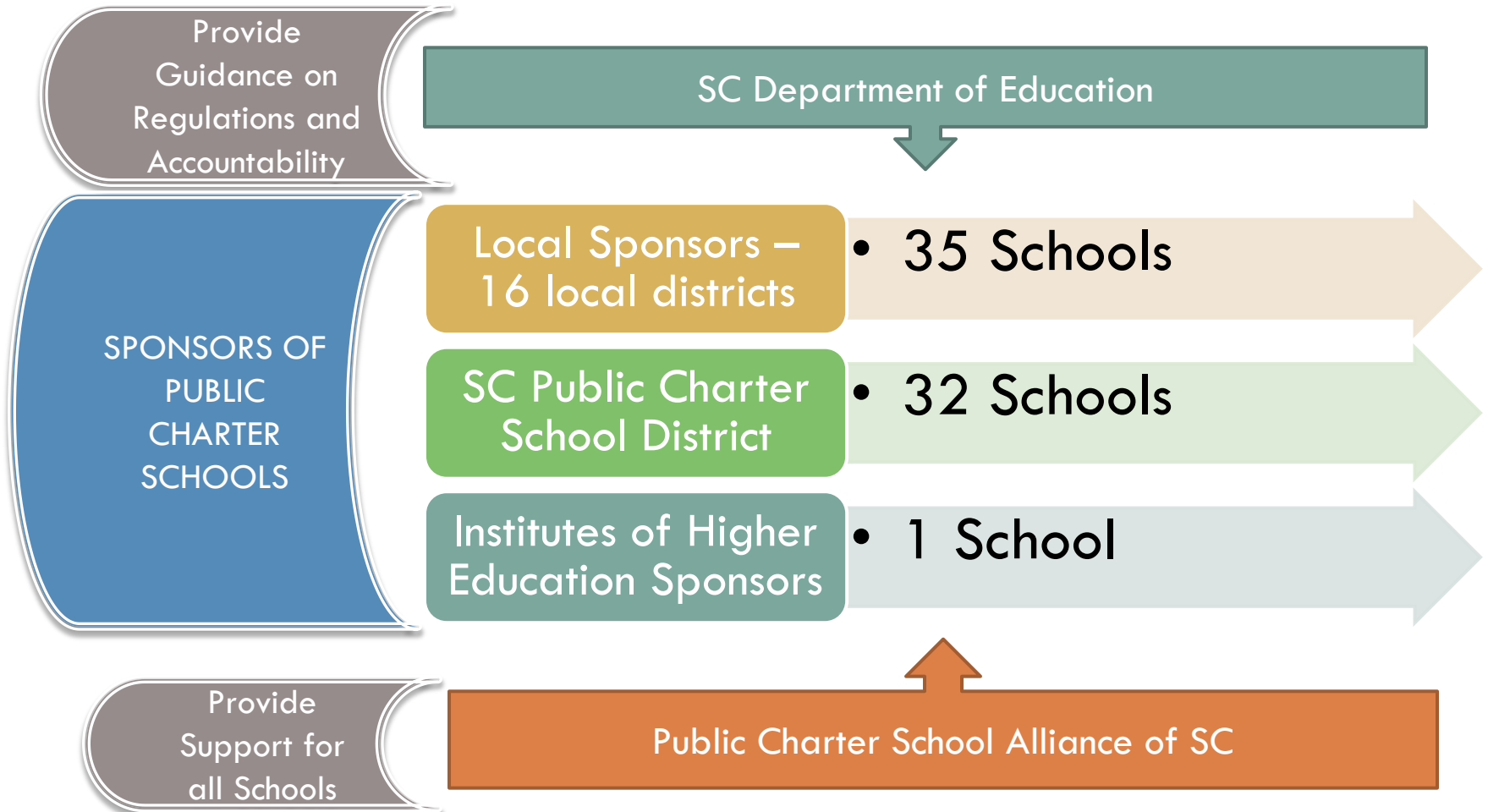
- is a public school
- is nonreligious
- is non-home-based
- is a nonprofit corporation forming a school
- operates by sponsorship of a public school district, the South Carolina Public Charter School District, or a public or independent institution of higher learning
- is accountable to the board of trustees, or in the case of technical colleges, the area commission, of the sponsor which grants its charter

What is a charter school sponsor?

From §59-40-40 of the Charter Schools Act, a sponsor is:

- the South Carolina Public Charter School District Board of Trustees,
- the local school board of trustees in which the charter school is to be located, OR
- an institution of higher learning.
- the charter school's Local Education Agency (LEA).

Charter Schools in South Carolina



Charter School Sponsor

The charter school sponsor is the charter school's Local Education Agency (LEA) and a charter school is a school within that LEA.

The sponsor retains responsibility for special education and shall ensure that students enrolled in its charter schools are served in a manner consistent with LEA obligations under applicable federal, state, and local law.

Charter School Sponsor's Powers and Responsibilities

As outlined in (§59-40-55):

- Approve applications that meet requirements.
- Decline applications in accordance with § 59-40-70(C).
- Negotiate and execute sound charter contracts with each school.
- Monitor the school's performance, legal and fiscal compliance, including collecting and analyzing data to support ongoing evaluation.
- Conduct or require oversight activities.

Charter School Sponsor's Powers and Responsibilities (cont.)

- Collect an annual report for each school and submit report to SCDE.
- Notify school of problems; provide opportunity for schools to remedy problems unless it warrants revocation.
- Take corrective actions or exercises sanction short of revocation in response to deficiencies in performance or legal compliance.
- Determine whether each charter contract merits renewal, nonrenewal, or revocation.
- Provide to parents and the public, information about charter school enrollment.

Things to Know

- The duration of a charter is for 10 years. (§59-40-110)
- Sponsor *must* revoke or non-renew charter under certain circumstances. (§59-40-110)
- A charter school may terminate its contract with a sponsor before the ten-year term of contract if all parties under contract with the charter school agree to the dissolution.
- A charter school that terminates its contract with a sponsor directly may seek application for the length of time remaining on its original contract from another sponsor. (§59-40-115)